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**Minnesota West students in Morris for hands-on wind turbine experience**

*Summary: The students are part of the Wind Energy Technology program at Minnesota West.*

(April 22, 2011)-Students from Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Canby were in Morris last week to get hands-on experience working with the University of Minnesota, Morris and West Central Research and Outreach (WCROC) wind turbines. The students are part of the Wind Energy Technology program at Minnesota West that started in 2005. The partnership between two public institutions, the Minnesota State Colleges and University system and the University of Minnesota, illustrates a Morris energy program goal: to provide learning opportunities for not just Morris students but for all who will benefit and advance sustainability.

The Canby program “combines lecture and hands-on training to provide skills necessary in completing advanced technical troubleshooting and repairs on wind energy turbines.” Canby offers an online certificate, a one-year diploma, and a two-year diploma, its most popular.

Brad Bulluyt, one of three Canby wind energy instructors, is happy to be in Morris working with Cory Marquart, WCROC scientist. Bulluyt thinks it’s a perfect fit. “We have the [technical] program but no turbine, he says. “You have the turbines but no program.”

Bulluyt and instructors Laceson Town and Gary Olsen work to incorporate as much hands-on experience into the program as they can. “We have a great partnership with Outland Energy Services out of Canby. They really help us get the students experience while they’re in our program and after they complete it,” says Bulluyt.

Outland Energy Services, an industry leader in wind turbine operations and maintenance, also serves as a great option for employment for students trained through Canby’s program. Ben Marxen of Milbank, South Dakota, a second-year student in the two-year program, recently was offered a job at Outland beginning after graduation this spring. Marxen researched a lot of schools with wind energy programs before he ended up in Canby, and he says, “Minnesota West was one of the best out there.”

Chad Truax from Spearfish, South Dakota, had a similar experience. “I was researching schools in the Midwest with programs in wind energy, and Minnesota West was the most established,” says Truax. There were schools closer to home, but they didn’t have the solid history Minnesota West has.”

Bulluyt was quick to give a lot of thanks to the University of Minnesota, Morris, WCROC, and Marquart for working with Minnesota West on this week long partnership. He says, “This is a great way for our students to get hands-on experience, and we really appreciate the opportunity.”

Photo above: wind turbine by Patrick O’Leary, University of Minnesota photographer

Photo below: students in the Minnesota West Wind Energy Technology program

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.